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Caleb Fleming
Works. V. 2.

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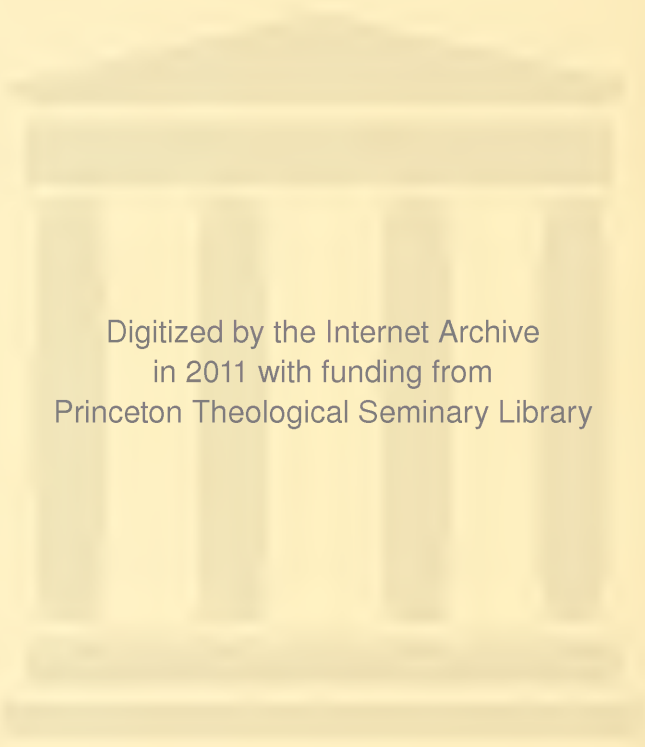

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ANOTHER

DEFENCE

OF THE

UNITY,

WHEREIN

St. JOHN's Introduction to his Gospel, and his Account of the *Word's being made Flesh*, are considered.

WITH

A few REMARKS on some very late notable Publications, particularly those of Dr. BENJAMIN DAWSON, and Dr. KENNICOT.

Αλλ' ημιν εις Θεος ο πατηρ — και εις Κυριος Ιησους Χριστος.

LONDON:
Printed for T. LONGMAN, in Pater-noster-Row.
MDCCLXVI.

A

PREFATORY ADDRESS

TO THE

READER.

" A Very elegant *writer* has obſerv-
" ed, that " though the articles
" of religious belief, which fall
" within the comprehenſion of mankind,
" and ſeem eſſential to their happineſs, are
" *few* and *ſimple*; yet ingenious men have
" contrived to erect them into a moſt tre-
" mendous ſyſtem of *metaphyſical* ſubtilty,
" which will long remain a monument of
" the extent and weakneſs of human un-
" derſtanding.—By attempting to eſtabliſh
" too much, they have hurt the foundation
" of the moſt intereſting principles of re-
" ligion."——

And *again*, he ſays,—" that religion con-
" ſidered as a ſcience, in the manner it has
" been uſually conducted, is but little be-

" neficial to mankind, neither tending to " enlarge the underſtanding, ſweeten the " temper, nor mend the heart. At the " ſame time the labours of ingenious men, " in explaining obſcure and difficult paſ- " ſages of ſacred writ, have been highly " uſeful and neceſſary. And as it is na- " tural for men to carry their ſpeculations " on a ſubject, that ſo nearly concerns their " preſent and eternal happineſs, farther than " reaſon extends, or than is clearly and ex- " preſsly revealed; *even* theſe can be fol- " lowed by no bad conſequences, if they " are carried on with that modeſty and " reverence which the ſubject requires. " They only become pernicious when they " are formed into *ſyſtems*, to which the ſame " credit and ſubmiſſion is required as to " holy writ itſelf *".

In many of the things advanced, in *his comparative view*, I agree with this writer. —And now refer my reader to a late very ſingular publication, which would prove from Scripture, the following propoſitions,

* *A comparative view of the ſtate and faculties of man, &c.* p. 177 & 183.

in

in ſupport of the preſent eſtabliſhed Liturgy.

" 1ſt, That he who redeemed us was " very God, manifeſted in the fleſh, not " the firſt of created beings united to an " human body, nor a mere man in whom " the fulneſs of the Godhead dwelt not."

" 2dly, That Jeſus Chriſt was indeed " perfect man, of a reaſonable ſoul and " human fleſh ſubſiſting; but that man in " whom God himſelf, and no other being, " in nature inferior dwelt."

" 3dly, That the holy ghoſt is of a na- " ture perfectly divine; not a diſtinct and " ſeparate nature from the Father almighty, " inferior both to him and the Son, but " true and very God; or, in other words, " that he, who hath ſanctified, is one and " the ſame God with him that created and " redeemed us *."

The reaſon of my making this citation, is, to ſhew, that if ſuch an interpretation of Scripture can be brought in defence of an *eſtabliſhed Liturgy*, by a conforming di-

* Dr. BENJAMIN DAWSON's *illuſtrations of ſeveral texts of ſcripture*, &c. A. D. 1766.

vine;

vine; the following conſiderations upon the *Word*, and upon the *Word's being made fleſh*, can never give the leaſt reaſonable offence to the Sons of OUR CHURCH.

Much light had before been thrown on the ſubject, by the late reverend and learned Mr. MOSES LOWMAN; in his three tracts, *viz.*—" on the appearances of the true God, " under the old teſtament—on the *Shechi-* " *nah*;—and on the texts of Scripture re- " lating to the LOGOS."——Which tracts were publiſhed in the year 1756.

Since then, another very learned and judicious tract favoured the public, under the title of, *a Letter writ in the year* 1730. concerning the queſtion, " whether the Lo- " GOS ſupplied the place of a human ſoul " in the perſon of Jeſus Chriſt?" which made its firſt open appearance, in the year 1759. and which indeed has great merit, both from the candour, perſpicuity and weight of the argument.

What is now offered, I truſt, is, in harmony with the deſign of theſe publications, tho' with ſome *peculiarity* of interpretation. And the Author, in defence of them and himſelf,

himſelf, would take the liberty of adopting what a man of genius has ſaid of *arts* and *ſciences*, as applicable to the religious profeſſion. "No ſcience, ſays he, ever flouriſh-"ed, while it was confined to a ſet of men "who lived by it, as a profeſſion. Such "men have purſuits very different from the "end and deſign of it. The intereſted "views of a *trade* are far different from the "enlarged and different proſpects of ge-"nius and ſcience.—When the knowledge "of an art is confined in this manner, "every private practitioner muſt attend to "the general principles of his craft; or "ſtarve. If he goes out of the common "path, he is an object of the jealouſy and "abuſe of his brethren, and among the "reſt of mankind he can neither find judges "nor patrons."

Theſe fine obſervations made upon arts and ſciences, are extremely applicable to the religious profeſſion; and hence ſo *few* have dared to make an open defence of the UNITY.

This publication would have had no place, had not the Author been of opinion, that it is

in

in ſome degree, calculated to the end of reſtoring an almoſt loſt idea of the Scripture doctrine of *the one God*; which loſs has ſadly depraved the tempers of mankind.—For, ſays the above writer, "the worſt effects "of controverſial theology are thoſe, which "it produces on the temper and affections. "—When the mind is kept conſtantly em-"barraſſed in a thorny path, where it can "find no ſteady light to ſhew the way, nor "foundation to reſt upon, the temper loſes "its native chearfulneſs, and contracts a "gloom and ſeverity, partly from the cha-"grin of diſappointment, and partly from "the ſocial and kind affections being extin-"guiſhed for want of exerciſe.—Which "evil has been exaſperated, when men have "been perſuaded, that their holding cer-"tain opinions intitled them to the divine "favour; and that thoſe who differed from "them, were devoted to deſtruction *." See the QUICUNQUE VULT, in its damnatory clauſes; and alſo the *creed* of popiſh and other fanatics.

* *A comparative view*, &c. p. 180, 181.

CON-

CONSIDERATIONS

ON THE

LOGOS.

WHAT has occaſioned ſo much controverſy concerning the Logos, or *Word of God*, among chriſtian divines, ſeems principally to have been, "an apprehended difficulty in the "*introduction* to St. John's Goſpel."—*Commentators* are much diſagreed in their interpretations. And what ſhould be the preciſe ſenſe of the Logos, has been the warm diſpute of ages. If therefore a conſiſtent, eaſy, and clear reading can be given to this, we may hope, that every difficulty or obſcurity, ſuppoſed to lye upon that introduction, will remove.

Now the Logos or *Word of God*, in the language of the ſacred books of the old teſtament, does denote, (as ſhall preſently be ſhewn,) "the expreſs manifeſtative will

" of God, whenever made, or in whatever " manner."—And thus underſtood, it is as well conceived of when creating, as it is when ſuccouring, or when informing and correcting his moral creation.—Hence when St. *John* opens his hiſtory, he very pertinently ſays,—*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The ſame was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.*—There is no kind of difficulty found in this repreſentation; for the manifeſtative will of God, was not only *in the beginning*, but had been ever *with God*, and muſt be venerated, *as God*; even becauſe it is the expreſs manifeſtation of God. This very ſame idea St. *Paul* conveys, when he obſerves, *that the inviſible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly ſeen, being underſtood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead.* In which obvious ſenſe, the WORD may be ſaid to be God, and alſo to be in the beginning with him; inaſmuch *as all things were made by him; and without him, was not any thing made*

made that was made. In other words, not any thing could come into exiſtence, but what would manifeſt the will of the creator.

The Evangeliſt riſes in his repreſentation of the WORD. *In him was life, and the life was the light of men:* i. e. he has been made manifeſt, as the infinite ſource of *life* and *light*, to all his intelligent creation *. He, as a governor of moral agents, made himſelf known to our world, by conſulting the *life* of men, in all the maxims of his rule.—*But the light ſhineth in darkneſs, and the darkneſs comprehended it not.*—Even the divine light of prophecy, which had, from the beginning, foretold the moſt deſireable age of the *Meſſiah*, had been ſo egregiouſly perverted, that the Jewiſh nation had loſt the benefit of that heavenly illumination. The world was become ſo very blind, by prejudice and vice, as to reject the divine evidence.

Nevertheleſs, *there was a man ſent from God, whoſe name was* JOHN. *The ſame came for a witneſs, to bear witneſs of the light, that all men through him might believe:* tho'

* *See the Appendix.*

he was not that light; which mankind either formerly had, or were encouraged to expect, and hope for; *but was ſent to bear witneſs of that light. That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.* —And yet *he*, the Word of God, *was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.* So depraved, ſo ignorant were the pagan idolatrous nations, as not to infer his eternal power and godhead, from the viſible creation. The very idea of *a creator*, was baniſhed from a great part of the human family. Nay, *he came to his own, and his own received him not*; *but as many as did receive him, to them gave he power*, i. e. a right or privilege, *to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.*

Old Teſtament Scriptures do contain a convincing record of the truth of this report, concerning the *divine Word*; inaſmuch as the Jewiſh nation, whom God had ſeparated from the reſt of mankind, as a peculiar people, did retain ſuch an amazing perverſeneſs, under all the appearances of God for them, that ſundry prophets complain

plain bitterly of their notorious infidelity and flagrant impiety. Nevertheleſs, there were ſome of them that were much more ſenſible, ingenuous, and obedient;—and to theſe, it were, that *he gave the privilege of* SONS.—So St. *Paul* obſerves, *that they are not all Iſrael, which were of Iſrael.* Rom. ix. 6.—We are next told in what manner, or upon what principle they obtained a FILIATION;—*which were born, not of blood*, i. e. not becauſe of their being the natural deſcendants of Abraham;—*nor of the will of the fleſh*, i. e. not becauſe they had been obſervant of carnal ordinances; or had been circumciſed: neither were they *born of the will of man*; i. e. not by reaſon of the reverence they had ſhewn to the traditions of their elders; but they were honoured with this filiation, from the obedience which they had ſhewn *to the will of God.*

This appears, to me, the moſt natural and obvious ſenſe of the Evangeliſt; and at once determines the teachings of the divine Word to the Hebrew people, as preciſely intended in this deſcription.—In like manner, *all who did receive the* HARBINGER'S

GER's teſtimony to the voice of prophecy, did alſo *become the Sons of God.*—The hiſtorian, next introduces the ſhechinizing of the WORD, in the perſon of Jeſus Chriſt; which he thus expreſſes—*and the Word was made fleſh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*——

Several diſtinct inquiries ſhould be made, if we would, with any preciſion, affix the doctrinal meaning of this deſcription. Such as eſtabliſhing,

1ſt The true ſenſe of the *Logos*, or Word.

2dly, Of its being made fleſh, and dwelling among us.

3dly, Wherein the glory of the only begotten of the Father did conſiſt.

4thly, What St. John meaneth, when he ſays, and *we beheld his glory?*

1ſt, It has been already affirmed, that the term, *Logos*, or Word, is uſed by the Evangeliſt, for *the manifeſtative will of God, however, or whenever made.* Now, there is not any thing more common, in the Hebrew Scriptures, than this phraſe, *the Word, the Word of God, or the Word of the Lord,* to

expreſs the will either of the creator, preſerver, or governor of the world. Pſ. xxxiii. 6. *by the Word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the hoſts of them by the breath of his mouth.* cxlviii. 5. *praiſe the name of the Lord, for he commanded, and they were created.*

The very miracles by which *Pharaoh* was tried, performed by the inſtrumentality of *Moſes*, are called, *the Word of the Lord*; Pſ. cv. 19. *until the time that the Word of the Lord came; the Word of the Lord tried him.* And when God had wrought deliverance for Iſrael, he is ſaid to ſend his Word. Pſ. cvii. 20. *he ſent his Word, and healed them, and delivered them from their deſtructions.* The different appearances of nature, in the plan of providence, are aſcribed to the *Word of God.* cxlviii. 18. *when the ice was caſt forth from the cloud as morſels, he ſendeth out his Word and melteth them.*

The phraſe is common to all the *prophets*; they are wont to call the meſſages which they deliver, *the Word of God.*—So 1 Sam. ix. 27. SAMUEL ſays to Saul, *Stand ſtill to-day,*

day, that I may ſhew thee the Word of God.— 1 Kings xii. 22. *the Word of God came to* SHEMAIAH. *The Word of God came to* NATHAN, *ſaying:* And it is the uſual addreſs of EZEKIEL,—*the Word of the Lord came unto me.* It would be endleſs to cite all the places, where the *Word of God*, or the *Word of the Lord*, is uſed to denote, his *manifeſtative will.* It is almoſt every where to be found, in the ſacred ſcriptures; and will fully juſtify this Evangeliſt, in making uſe of a term ſo very familiar to the Jews; and which never could be miſtaken by any who were at all acquainted with their writings.

We accordingly find the Apoſtle, when writing to the Hebrew chriſtians, thus beginning his epiſtle, by ſhewing them, "that "it was the very ſame Word of God by "which the worlds were made, that had "ſpoken, at ſundry times and in divers "manners, to the fathers by the prophets; "and in theſe laſt days, by his Son." q. d. The Goſpel makes a revelation of the will of no other being, than of him who made all things, and who has been inſtructing mankind from the beginning. Methinks, this

this may be sufficient to affix the sense of the term, *Logos*, or *Word*, *Word of God*, or *Word of the Lord*.

The next inquiry will be, in what sense the *Word was made flesh?*

It is an undoubted truth, that *flesh*, or the man Christ Jesus, was made by the *Logos*, or by the Word of God: for it was *the power of the highest* that did create or form him, in the womb of the virgin. So Mary his mother was assured it should be, from that same divine Word which spake by the angel.—— That the *Word* was God himself, has been shewn from ver. 1. "where St. *John* useth a "gradation. First he says, the Word was "always, before all time. Then he adds, "and *was with God*; and lastly, that he was "God himself *." But says a conforming divine, "*and God was the Word* †;" when we have these decisive readings of the *Word*, it surely would not be so very intelligible to say, *and flesh, that is, a man became the Word and*

* *Letter writ in the year* 1730. p. 24.

† Dr. DAWSON's illustrations, p. 59.

dwelt among us *. Could fleſh or a man become God? methinks, that muſt be utterly inconceivable. και ο λογος σαρξ εγενετο, can never have ſuch meaning.—God could not be made man; nor could he take upon him the human nature; tho' the man Jeſus, the *Meſſiah*, had the WORD, that is, the wiſdom and power of God, reſiding with him. The manifeſtative will of God, called, *the Word*, could no otherwiſe be made fleſh, than as it ſo reſided with the man Chriſt Jeſus. He was made the *Shechinah*, or temple of God; the divine preſence with him, was oracular: or, he ſet his tabernacle in fleſh, according to 1 *Kings* viii. 27. compared with *Apoc.* xxi. 3. The reſidence of the *Logos* with Jeſus Chriſt was ſo intimate and expreſſive, as to juſtify St. *John*, in ſaying, *the Word was made fleſh, and dwelt among us*. Deity was, by him, ſo fully declared, or made manifeſt in his paternal truth and grace, that our Lord ſays to *Philip*, "whoſoever hath ſeen "me, hath ſeen the Father." And yet,

* Dr. DAWSON's illuſtrations, p. 72, & 100.

in

in fair conſtruction, *Philip* could not ſuppoſe, *that Jeſus Chriſt was the Father:* but only, that the moſt expreſſive revelation of the Father, was made by him.

When therefore the Evangeliſt ſays, *that the Word was made fleſh, and dwelt among us*, he would not be underſtood to mean, that the *Word* was converted into fleſh; or, that it became a man; or, that the Word did conſtitute any part of the perſon of the man Chriſt Jeſus; tho' it had the moſt expreſſive and illuſtrious abode with him. The Deity could not poſſibly ſuffer any change, or the leaſt ſhadow of change.

Amelius, a platonic philoſopher and diſciple of *Plotinus*, of whom *Euſebius* makes mention, has this interpretation of St. *John's introduction*,—" and this, plainly, was the " Word by whom, he being himſelf eter- " nal, were made all things that are, as " *Heraclitus* alſo would ſay: and by Jove " the ſame, whom the *Barbarian* affirms " to have been in the place and dignity of " a principle, and to be with God, and to " be God: by whom all things were made, " and in whom every thing that was made

" has its life and being. Who deſcending " into body, and putting on fleſh, took the " form of man: tho' even then he gave " proof of the majeſty of his nature *."

This Heathen ſeems to have underſtood St. *John* much better than many chriſtians have done: tho' he calls him *Barbarian*, becauſe he was a *Jew* who wrote in Greek.

But, at the ſame time, one may perceive how the platonic Philoſophers miſtook the true ſenſe of *the Word's being made fleſh*.—"Deſcending into body, and putting on fleſh," don't appear to convey St. *John's* ſenſe, as ſhall be farther ſhewn.

That the WORD did not become any part of the perſon of Chriſt, is evident, from his ever aſcribing his ſupernatural diſcernment, his all-penetrating knowledge, his aſtoniſhing wiſdom and power, to the Father! he never once appropriates any divine property or perfection to himſelf †. For tho' he once ſays, *I and the Father are one*;—yet,

* Dr. LARDNER's pagan teſtimonies, vol. III. p. 96, 97.

† See Matth. xix. 17. John v. 19, 30.—viii. 28.

he

he intended not to assert an essential or personal oneness; but only, that *he did the works of his Father*, and *did receive the doctrine, which he taught, from him.* This will undeniably appear, to be his meaning, when *John* x. 30. is diligently compared with verses, 37th and 38th.

The *Logos*, or *Word*, was so far from being the soul of Christ, as some have imagined, that he expressly denies he had any divine abilities, but what were his Father's: *of himself he could do nothing.*—And we might as truly say, that the LOGOS or Word, became the person of *Moses*, of *Elijah*, or of any of the *prophets*, as that it became the soul of the man Christ Jesus; else, we might equally say, that the person of Moses became the *Word*, as that the person of Christ became the *Word.*

That his name was called, EMANUEL, i. e. *God with us*, will be of very easy conception, on account of that most express and significant abode which the Word of God had with him *. So confident was he of

* Hence his name is called, the *Word of* God. Apoc. xix. 13.

this

this expreſſive preſence of the Father with him, that he ſays to *Philip*, *Believeſt thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in me? the words that I ſpeak unto you, I ſpeak not of myſelf: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.* John xiv. 10.—And when he aſſerts the infallibility of the judgment which he gave of men and things, Chap. viii. 16. he aſſigns this reaſon for it,—*I am not alone, but I and the Father that ſent me.* And at ver. xxix. *he that ſent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone, for I do always thoſe things that pleaſe him.* Nay, he thus comforts himſelf, when taking a prophetic proſpect of his being forſaken of all the diſciples, *John* xvi. 32. *Behold the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye ſhall be ſcattered every one to his own, and ſhall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, becauſe the Father is with me.* Thus we can conceive of the *Word's being made fleſh*, as it abode ſo illuſtriouſly in, or with the perſon of the man Chriſt Jeſus.

In this diſquiſition, we are 3dly to inquire, in what it was that the glory did conſiſt? for St. *John* ſays, *and we beheld his glory,*

as

as the glory of the ONLY BEGOTTEN *of the Father, full of grace and truth.*——

Now the *glory* of any being or thing, is the perfection or the excellence of its nature and properties, diſcoverable by ſome manifeſtation made of that excellence.—But the reſidence of the *Logos* or Word with the man Chriſt Jeſus, revealing the truth and grace of God to mankind, was, what rendered him ſo diſtinguiſhingly and ſo peculiarly illuſtrious, as to be called, the ONLY BEGOTTEN *of the Father*.—Now, to be *begotten of God*, in the ſenſe of this writer, is, to be prevailed upon by his teachings, to expreſs a cordial devotedneſs, to all his will. Thus, in his *introduction*, he ſpeaks of men having the privilege of *Sons*, who were born of God, by their doing of his will.—i. e. by ingenuouſly receiving the inſtructions that were given them, from the *Logos* or Word of God.

Whereas Jeſus Chriſt is *the only begotten of the Father*, as he was diſtinguiſhed from all mankind by prophecy and by his formation; by his ſinleſs, and moſt perfect obedience and unreſerved devotedneſs to all his Father's will; alſo by miracle! for we are to keep in mind, that

that when St. *John* wrote his Goſpel, the moſt complete teſtimony had been actually and extenſively given to his divine character and miſſion. For, verily, he had been greatly diſtinguiſhed by *ſigns, wonders, and divers miracles!* "God having anointed Je-" ſus of Nazareth with the holy ghoſt and " with power, who went about doing good, " and healing all that were oppreſſed of the " devil; for GOD WAS WITH HIM." as St. *Peter* bore an expreſs record, *Acts* x. 38.— But beſides all this teſtimony, thoſe divine gifts which he had promiſed, had been abundantly beſtowed on his apoſtles, as the writer to the Hebrew Chriſtians remarks,— "God had alſo born THEM witneſs, both " with ſigns and wonders, and with divers " miracles, and gifts of the holy ghoſt." Chap. ii. 4. which were in proof of their Lord's being exalted to the right hand of power, and of his having a name actually given him above every name.

Thus is it made manifeſt that Jeſus is the ONLY BEGOTTEN *of the Father* *. And be-

* See *Letter writ in the year* 1730. p. 29.—the only begotten, equivalent to well-beloved.

cauſe

cauſe of his exaltation to ſovereignty and dominion, St. *Peter* ſpeaks thus of him,—"who "is gone into heaven, and is at the right hand "of God, angels, authorities and powers be-"ing made ſubject to him." 1ſt Epiſtle iii. 22. And for the reaſon of his having this ſupremacy given him, St. *Paul* repreſents it as a CREATION, wherein this image, this repreſentative of the inviſible God, this firſt-born, this moſt excellent of every creature, has the ſubjection of all things made to him, "that are in heaven and earth, viſible and "inviſible; whether thrones, or dominions, "or principalities, or powers, all things are "created by and for him—and he is the "head of the body the church, the *firſt-*"*born* from the dead, that in all things he "might have the pre-eminence." *Col.* i. 15. —19.

All things thus ſaid to be *created* by him and for him, I ſhould underſtand, of all dynaſties, or orders of power being put under his ſceptre. Mr. LOCKE has ſhewn, that κτισαντι, is not always uſed by St. *Paul* to expreſs *creation*, i. e. the making out of nothing; for he uſes the word for the bringing

of *Jew* and *Gentile* into one ſociety, or family, Eph. i. 15. and for the whole *new creation* under Jeſus Chriſt, Chap. iii. 9. or he ſpeaks of the work of redemption by Chriſt, as a *new creation*. See his NOTES on the texts above. And as juſtly and reaſonably may we underſtand St. *Paul*, in his epiſtle to the *Coloſſians*, as having only in view the putting of the ſeveral dynaſties or orders of dignified beings, in heaven and earth, under the ſceptre of the man Chriſt Jeſus, the *Shechinah* of God.

After all, ſhould any be of opinion, that *Col.* i. 16. and *Heb.* i. 2, 3. muſt be underſtood of the firſt creation of the heavens and of the earth: there will be no difficulty in aſcribing ſuch creation to that *Logos* or Word, which tabernacled with the man Chriſt Jeſus. And ſo underſtood, it will correſpond with the idea of this Evangeliſt, who mentions, in his introduction, the creative power of the Word: and ſays, *that all things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made, that was made.* Is not ſuch interpretation much more reconcilable with our powers of conception? and is it not that

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in which we can have far more complacency, than in the ſtrange opinion of Jeſus Chriſt, who was truly man, *made of a woman, made under the law*, γενομενον εκ γυναικος γενομενον υπο νομον, being repreſented, as *the creator of the world.*

The Goſpel is a revelation or manifeſtation of truth, which has conſulted the powers of the human mind, in the eaſy and familiar repreſentation; and has nothing in its doctrines that would perplex and confound. There is not any thing intricate or myſterious in this laſt revelation. *Men ſhall not teach every one his neighbour, and every one his brother, ſaying,* KNOW THE LORD: *but all ſhall know him, from the leaſt to the greateſt.*— It is then ſufficient, that, in forming our ideas of the exaltation of Chriſt, we conſider him, as placed by the LOGOS, or by the expreſſive will of God, above all dynaſties or orders of power, in heaven and in earth.

Theſe are very expreſſive repreſentations of his being the *only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*——The revelation which he has made of the truth and grace

of God, is, that which gives the contents of Goſpel hiſtory. The which, whoever will conſult, with an honeſt mind, and a ſuitable degree of attention, will be conſtrained to own, that there is a *plenitude* in the revelation. Nor need we ſcruple to affirm, that there is alſo an excellence, a perfection, a glory to be aſcribed to this diſplay of the will of God. We muſt make ſuch grateful acknowledgment; ſince all other methods of conveying divine inſtruction, are found to fall far ſhort of the goſpel demonſtration, given us, of the *paternal* truth and grace of God. For which reaſon, this hiſtorian adds, *that no man has ſeen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the boſom of the Father, he hath declared him.*

4thly, It will not be of difficult conception, in what ſenſe St. *John* affirms, *and we beheld his glory.* The learned and venerable Author of *the Letter writ in the year* 1730. ſays, "it was not *the Word*, which St. "*John* and others beheld, but Jeſus, in "whom the Word dwelled. Him they be-"held. And his greatneſs was conſpicu-

"ous;

" ous: ſo that he appeared, and they knew " him to be, the *only begotten of the Father*, " or the Meſſiah *."

The glory which they beheld, did conſiſt in thoſe demonſtrations of the divine preſence with him, which gave the luſtre of his Spirit, of his doctrinal teachings, and of all his exemplary behaviour. Wiſdom, benevolence, and power ſhone throughout his public miniſtrations! and what wonder they ſhould, when he was to open the doctrine of immortal life to mankind, and aſſure them of his having actually made void the dominion of death!—That he, in fact, was the well-beloved of the Father, approved of the Governor of the univerſe, they were aſcertained, by a voice from heaven, once and again which they had heard, expreſsly declaring *him to be ſo*. And this hiſtorian was one of the three witneſſes of his *transfiguration!* Beſides this, his reſurrection and aſcenſion were made known, not only to them, but to great numbers of the diſciples:—and we can add to theſe very convincing evidences, the ability which they themſelves

* Page 29.

had

had of working miracles in the name of the exalted Jesus; which were enough to give Spirit to this declaration,—and WE SAW HIS GLORY!—St. *Peter* makes use of a like sort of Speech, when he says, "we have not "followed cunningly devised fables, whilst "we made known to you, the coming of "our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-wit-"nesses of his majesty, when there came "such a voice from the excellent glory, *this* "*is my beloved Son, in whom I am well* "*pleased.*"——

The glory which the residence of the *Logos* had conferred on the man Christ Jesus, might be farther learnt from the express declaration of this great prophet himself; for he said of his friend *Lazarus*, "this sick-"ness is not unto death, i. e. not unto an "irrecoverable death, but for the glory of "God; that the Son of God might be "glorified thereby." *John* xi. 4. And when he takes a view of the tendency which his own sufferings had, to convince the world of *sin*, of *righteousness*, and of *judgement*; he says,—"now is the Son of man glori-"fied, and God is glorified in him. If God

" be glorified in him, God ſhall glorify him " in himſelf, and ſhall ſtraightway glorify " him." *John* xiii. 31, 32. To this purpoſe, in his prayer, he greatly refreſheth his own Spirit, with the moral impreſſions that would be made on mankind, by his teachings. Chap. xvii. 10. " All mine are thine, and thine " are mine, and I am *glorified* in them." And again, this hiſtorian ſo underſtood the miraculous power, which wrought by his maſter, as manifeſting his glory. See chap. ii. 11. *This beginning of miracles did Jeſus— and manifeſted forth his glory.*—Very appoſite then is the *exordium* of St. *John's* firſt epiſtle, " that which was from the begin- " ning, which we have heard, which we " have ſeen with our eyes, which we have " *critically* looked upon, and our hands have " handled the Word of life."—

From the above view taken of the INTRODUCTION to St. *John's* Goſpel, and the deſcription which he has given of the LOGOS or Word, ſhechinized in the man Chriſt Jeſus; ſeveral uſeful *obſervations* may be made, or ſundry important concluſions drawn from the premiſes. Such as follow:

Obſ. I.

Obſ. I. St. *John's* account of the LOGOS or Word, will, by no means, allow us to conceive of it as any part of the *perſon* of Jeſus Chriſt; but only as reſiding *in* or *with* him; and becoming divinely oracular throughout his public miniſtrations. Which, at once, removes all obſcurity, and ſecures us from the unpleaſing perplexity of vulgar interpretations. We can now conceive of the ſame divine being, who gave exiſtence to the univerſal ſyſtem, as manifeſting his will, by creation, by preſervation, and by that government which he exerciſes over his rational and moral offspring; as, alſo in the finiſhing of his plan, becoming ſhechinized or as dwelling in the man Chriſt Jeſus; and thereby making himſelf moſt graciouſly familiar with mankind!—

There is therefore no manner of occaſion for the childiſh and abſurd invention of *a trinity in unity*; or, an *hypoſtatical* union of a duplicity of natures, in the perſon of Chriſt. Nor are we led to ſpeak of him, ſometimes as God, at other times as man. Opinions which confound, but do not convey any one rational,

rational, juſt, and inſtructive idea of the LOGOS, or *Word of God.*

But when we affix this ſenſe to the term, as expreſſive, or as manifeſtative of the will of God, whether under the idea of creator, preſerver, or governor, and redeemer, we are then able to conceive of it, as *in the beginning, as with God, and even as God*; becauſe the will of the Deity imports, ſupreme authority; and is every where to be ſo reverenced, even as *God.*

In giving, what I underſtand to be, the meaning of St. JOHN in his introduction, the phraſe, in our tranſlation runs, and *the Word was God*, και Θεος ην ο λογος· a writer abovementioned reads, "*and God was the Word*, "obſerving, that Arians and Socinians read, "*the Word was a God.**" —— But inaſmuch as the ſame writer, had before ſaid, "By the Word (John i. 1.) I apprehend the Evan-"geliſt means, *the Goſpel* †;" it does not ſo much illuſtrate this text, as it darkens the phraſe; ſince it is not ſo intelligible how *God is the Goſpel.* The reading ſeems much more eaſy and natural as it ſtands, *the Word was God*,

* Illuſtrations, p. 59. † Ibid, p. 58.

or God himſelf; conſidered and underſtood to be, *the manifeſtative will of God.* Which interpretation, perfectly accords with all ancient uſages of the term, LOGOS, or *Word*; and enables us to harmonize the laſt with all former manifeſtations of God; and at the ſame time renders us capable of diſcerning the divinity of the Goſpel diſpenſation clearly demonſtrated.

It is certainly of the laſt importance, that we preſerve an idea of the LOGOS or Word, as diſtinct from the perſon of Jeſus Chriſt; otherwiſe, we cannot underſtand him when he is abſolutely diſclaiming all divine perfections; and when he is aſcribing all that wiſdom and power, which did atteſt his miſſion, to communications of divine ability from the Father. Here, it will be proper for us to notice ſome very extraordinary repreſentations of our Lord's formation and birth, given us in a *Sermon* and *notes* lately publiſhed, by a very learned and diſtinguiſhed ſon of the church of England; who, in treating on Chriſt's *being born of a virgin*, has thus unwarily expreſſed himſelf, — "This "God viſible amongſt men, introduced into "the

" the world thus, ſhall yet be truly man, " he ſhall be born as an infant, and as an " infant ſhall he be brought up."

Again, " this divinity (i. e. that of the Meſſiah) is marked by his being God; his " reſidence upon earth, by his being God " with us: and his humanity, by his being " born of a woman, and fed with the " uſual food of infants during his infant " ſtate *."

More extraordinary yet, if poſſible,—" It " ſeems to have been a juſt mark of dig- " nity, that the AUTHOR OF NATURE ſhould " be diſtinguiſhed by not being born after " the ordinary courſe of nature: and hav- " ing ever been as no other being was, *the* " *Son of God*, he became what no other " ever was, *the Son of a virgin* †."

With great ſubmiſſion, I would aſk, whe- the Dr. KENNICOT has not here, in the moſt expreſſive language, very unwarily countenanced the popiſh doctrine, of the

* Dr. KENNICOTT's Sermon at Oxford, May 19, 1765, p. 26, 27.

† Ibid. *Notes*, p. 62.

Virgin Mary's being the *mother of God?* for if the author of nature could be born of a woman, aſſuredly, there will be ſome pretence for the homage paid her, by the papal world. And, methinks, the diſpute about the *immaculate conception*, as maintained by the *Franciſcans*, would be in their favour; and not on the ſide of the *Dominicans*.

The Dr. will allow me, however, to put theſe queſtions, — "If the author of nature "was born of a virgin, what poſſible oc- "caſion could there be, for his having the "*Spirit* poured out upon him at his bap- "tiſm? and what that ſpirit was, which "was then poured out upon him?" for if the God of nature, did become the Son of a virgin, then that Son of a virgin, could not be any other than the God of nature.

"Thus ingenious men are found ſup- porting that tremendous ſyſtem of *metaphyſical ſubtlety* which remains a monument of the extent and weakneſs of the human underſtanding, and by eſtabliſhing too much, do hurt the foundation of the moſt intereſting principles of religion."

But,

But, thanks be to God, ſo far from the leaſt countenance being given in ſacred ſcripture to ſuch repreſentation of the Meſſiah, as that of the God of nature's being born of a Virgin, he is always ſpoken of, in prophecy, as a *man*; and moſt commonly ſpeaks of himſelf as *the Son of man*; unleſs he has occaſion to mention the divine miſſion which he had to reveal the Father to mankind; and then, he ſometimes calls himſelf the *Son of God*. Yet, whenever he uſes that exalted ſtile, it is not to be imagined, he would be underſtood to mean, *he was that God whoſe Son he was*.—If therefore we would preſerve any rational or intelligible ideas of Jeſus Chriſt, we muſt contemplate the LOGOS, or Word, which dwelt with him, as abſolutely diſtinct from his perſon.—*In a word*, the ſupreme univerſal power, authority and dignity, by which the LOGOS did expreſs itſelf, whilſt dwelling with the man Chriſt Jeſus, was, what determined the character of the true *Meſſiah*. Or, in the words of a learned divine, "he was thus the true "*Shechinah*; the true glory of God as really "dwelt in him, as when the *Word of the Shechinah*

" *Shechinah* gave forth the command for the " creation of the world, or when it pub- " liſhed the law at mount Sinai, or when it " enter'd the tabernacle and temple, and the " whole worſhip of the Hebrew church, " and all proper divine honours were given " unto it.*" Yet, aſſuredly, no reaſonable man can ſay, that either the *angel*, the *tabernacle*, the *temple*, or the *prophet*, was other, or more than the *Shechinah*, or inſtrument of conveyance, by which a manifeſtation was made of the Word, or will of God. — For will any ſay, that becauſe the Word of the Shechinah ſaid to Moſes, *I will make thee a God to Pharaoh*; or, *thou ſhalt be to him inſtead of God.* (Exod. iv. 16. vii. 1.) that therefore *Moſes* became the ſame with the *divine Word*, which wrought ſuch wonders by him? This would be very unaccountable. The Jewiſh multitudes were extremely ignorant and depraved; but yet, when they ſaw the miracles which our Lord wrought among them, they *gave glory to God.* They did not aſcribe the power to Jeſus of Nazareth, but to *the God of nature*,

* LOWMAN's Three tracts, p. 247.

who

who thus bore teſtimony to his being the *Meſſiah*. They diſtinguiſhed between the perſon of Jeſus Chriſt, and that Word of God which dwelt with him; between the Being who ſent, and his meſſenger.

Obſ. II. The ſenſe in which we have underſtood the LOGOS, or Word of God, will quite annihilate the idea of his pre-exiſtence, whom we call CHRIST.

It ſhould ſeem, that it has been owing to men's not keeping their conceptions of the *Word*, and of the perſon of Chriſt diſtinct, that they have ſo unnaturally fancied a pre-exiſtence of the man Chriſt Jeſus. At the ſame time, no one may call in queſtion a pre-exiſtence of the *divine Word*, which dwelt with him. And it has been ſhewn, with great evidence and maſterly addreſs, that the LOGOS did not ſupply the place of any human ſoul in the perſon of Jeſus Chriſt; which may be ſeen, *in the Letter writ in the year* 1730. — Allow me to add, that, the *two* or *three* texts in the New Teſtament, ſuppoſed to countenance this, will be found to have no ſuch meaning, if our interpre-

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tation of the LOGOS, be juſt and defenſible. —Beſides St. *John*'s introduction, the texts which have moſt puzzled the minds of ſome chriſtians are, *John* vi. 62.—viii. 58.—xvii. 5. As to the *firſt* paſſage, methinks, the ſolution may be thus given,—"What? and "if ye ſhall ſee the Son of man, after he "has given his fleſh to the tortures and "death of a croſs, re-aſſume his former "exalted character of the *well-beloved of the* "*Father?* You will then underſtand the "ſpiritual and life-giving deſign of my miſ-"ſion."—And is not this agreeable to the drift of his reaſoning? let any one read the context.—The next difficult paſſage, is, *before Abraham was, I am.* The Jews aſked him, *whether he was greater than their father Abraham?* If this be an anſwer to that queſtion, it is given in the affirmative; and is the ſame as if he had ſaid, *yes, I am greater.*—Should it yet be ſaid, the words would intimate, a *prior* exiſtence to that of *Abraham?*—The anſwer may be, ſuch an interpretation is not at all neceſſary, for he could not perſonally be before him, in point of time, any otherwiſe than as he

is

is ſpoken of in prophecy, *as the ſeed of the woman.*—And concerning whom Abraham had the pleaſure of expecting ſuch a deſcendant, in *whom all nations ſhould be bleſſed.*—Elſe we may underſtand our Lord, as ſpeaking in the perſon of the *Logos*, or of the divine Word, which dwelt with him.—This had been ſometimes the manner of *angels* and of *prophets*, by whom the *Word of the Shechinah* ſpake. And how otherwiſe muſt we underſtand him, when he ſays, *I am that living bread which cometh down from heaven.*—Now, by the moſt reaſonable and fair conſtruction, our Lord could intend no other by that *living bread* than the DOCTRINE he delivered, which was ſo expreſſive of the will of the Father. Which very doctrine, was *that living bread, of which men might eat, and live for ever.* He muſt, conſequently, be underſtood as perſonating the LOGOS or Word of God, when he ſays, *I am the living bread, which came down from heaven.* And in no other ſenſe can he be underſtood, when he ſays, *I am the light of the world.* John viii. 12.

This perſonating of the *Logos*, or of the manifeſtative will of the Father, is very familiar to him; nevertheleſs St. *John* obſerves, ver. 27. that the captious Jews, did *not underſtand that he ſpake to them of the Father*, when he was perſonally affirming theſe things of his doctrine.

May we not alſo underſtand our Lord, as perſonating the LOGOS, when he ſays, *I am the reſurrection and the life!—and he that believeth in me ſhall not periſh, but ſhall have eternal life?*—It cannot reaſonably be underſtood as intending any thing leſs than the energy of the divine WORD, operating under the Goſpel diſpenſation, and giving the laſt efficacy to the adminiſtration of this one Lord. It will be extremely difficult to conceive of Jeſus Chriſt being any otherwiſe *the reſurrection and the life*, but as the Father who has life in himſelf; eſſentially and underived; ſo has he GIVEN to the Son to have life in himſelf. And as the Father raiſeth up the dead, and quickneth them: even ſo the Son quickneth whom he will. comp. *John* v. 21. and 26. And his authority to execute judgment, is alſo *given* him; becauſe

becauſe *he is the Son of man:* he therefore could have no ſuch authority, if the Father had not given it to him, ver. 27.

It is not to be wondered at, he ſhould ſo frequently ſpeak in the *perſon* of the Father, when he could expreſsly declare, *I am come in my Father's name.—The works which I do are in my Father's name.*

But, that no one ſhould miſtake him, as if he made any claims to real divinity, he ſays, *ye ſhall know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myſelf:——I have not ſpoken of myſelf, but the Father who ſent me, hath given me a commandment, what I ſhould ſay, and what I ſhould ſpeak. Whoſoever ſhall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that ſent me.*— Theſe paſſages are ſufficient to ſhew, that when the bleſſed Jeſus ſays; *before Abraham was I am*; he may be well underſtood, as perſonating the divine Word which ſpake by him. And this ſenſe is not at all improbable, when we advert to the language he uſes in the antcedent context, ſee ver. 47. *He that is of God, heareth God's words: ye therefore hear not, becauſe ye are not of God.*—

As to the *third* difficult text, where he prays, *that the Father would glorify him, with the glory which he had with him before the world was*—It has been underſtood, by thoſe who have denied the *pre-exiſtence* of Jeſus Chriſt, to intend, the glory which God had originally deſigned him, in reward of his obedience unto death, even the death of the croſs. Which is a very rational and juſt interpretation, and agrees well with thoſe other ſcriptures, where chriſtians are ſaid to be *choſen in Chriſt before the foundation of the world.* And where Jeſus Chriſt is ſaid to be *a lamb ſlain before the foundation of the world.*

The judicious author of *the Letter writ in the year* 1730, has ſaid more to the purpoſe on this ſubject, than any other I have ever yet ſeen; and from whom I have borrowed much information: he has written with a freedom, which does not, which unhappily cannot attend the pen of a church-man.—

Obſ. III. If there is no divine perſon, but that of the FATHER, as ſhould appear to be the teaching of Chriſt and of all his apoſtles; then the opinion of more than one

perſon

perſon in the godhead, muſt be unſcriptural. To affirm therefore, as ſome have done, "that there are three perſons of one ſub-"ſtance, power and eternity in the unity of "the Godhead;" muſt throw darkneſs and confuſion upon the unity. For, in truth, the unity might every whit as well be proved from the pagan polytheiſm, as from the *Athanaſian* Symbol. None need ſcruple to ſay, that theſe propoſitions are mathematically falſe,—viz. "*three* are not more than *one*; and *one* is not leſs than *three*." No Trinitarian is, or ever will be, able to confute the advocate for TRANSUBSTANTIATION.——

Obſ. IV. We have infinite reaſon of admiration, gratitude, and praiſe, becauſe the *Word of God*, by which the worlds were made, and have been preſerved and governed, did condeſcend ſo to reſide with the man Chriſt Jeſus, as to manifeſt all that *truth* and *grace*, which can either guide and direct, ſuccour and ſupport, comfort and refreſh mankind, under all the darkneſſes, difficulties, dangers, burdens and grievances of

of this preſent life; and alſo qualify them for the bliſsful fruitions of a future ſtate and world. It is very pleaſing, nay, it is highly tranſporting to contemplate the divine advantages of Goſpel inſtruction.

It ſhould, indeed, be reaſonable to conclude, that no age of the world has been without ſome teachings of the *divine Word.* The will of God, has been ſome way or other made manifeſt to mankind. Yet no antecedent teachings, of which we are informed, have been able to bear a compariſon with thoſe under the Goſpel. Were not this a truth, we could not account for St. JOHN's pouring ſo much contempt on the Moſaic diſpenſation, as he does, juſt after he has mentioned the *in-dwelling of the Word with the man Chriſt Jeſus*; ſee ver. 17. *the law was given by Moſes*; *but grace and truth came by Jeſus Chriſt.* q. d. comparatively, till then, *grace* and *truth* had not had any clear and full exhibition. *Again,* if we can ſuppoſe that the apoſtles did underſtand the importance of the doctrine which they delivered, we muſt be perſuaded, they had ſufficient reaſon

reaſon for being in raptures, whenever they mention the benevolence it ſhews to mankind.

Obſ. V. An apparent advantage it muſt be of to any one, in reading the Goſpels, to preſerve in his own mind, pure and unadulterated, an idea of the divine unity. *viz.* " that there is but one living and true God, " of neceſſary, everlaſting, and unchangeable " exiſtence, without body, parts, or paſſions; " of wiſdom, power, and goodneſs infinite: " the maker, preſerver, and governor of all " things viſible and inviſible." This would ſecure the human mind from all thoſe wild, and unreaſonable opinions, which divide, diſturb, and diſtract the whole chriſtian profeſſing world. *e. g.* What heated controverſies have been agitated about the mataphyſical nature of Chriſt? or rather, about his having *two natures*; the one divine, the other human! and whether he had *one* will, or *two* wills? Such futile, ſuch unedifying matters of debate, have filled the world with noiſe and clamor, and the church with ſable darkneſs and much confuſion. Whereas the manifeſt deſign of Goſpel teachings, is, to give mankind

mankind a moſt perfect revelation of the *truth* and *grace* of God.

If the moral or the practical end had been kept in view, and religiouſly obſerved, by the profeſſing world, the honours due to the divine miſſion of Jeſus, would have been paid by a more univerſal obedience to his teachings. But as it is, a thouſand ſtrange opinions are propagated; nor only ſo, but the homage of the chriſtian is become extremely ceremonious, idle, and ſuperſtitious.

Among other extravagancies, POPERY could never have found where to have ſet the ſole of her foot, if the divine *unity* had been preſerved pure and uncorrupt. That monſtrous deteſtable ſuperſtition, was erected upon mens depraving this firſt-principle of all religious worſhip! for, when once chriſtians had learnt to imagine, the *Godhead* divided into three perſons; and one of thoſe perſons into two natures; when they could once conceive of the *divine Logos*, as the Soul of Jeſus Chriſt, they were then prepared to embrace any fanciful opinion, that could be grafted upon theſe moſt abſurd principles.

Not

Not any thing gave the artful MAHOMET ſo much advantage, as chriſtians corrupting the doctrine of the unity. This was what rendered him ſo very capable of ſpreading his impoſture, when he could call himſelf a prophet of *the one God, who had no partners* *! The very unguarded way, which chriſtians had uſed, of ſpeaking about *an eternal generation of the Son*, was what gave him the opportunity of ridiculing the opinion with ſo much Spirit †.—The *doctrine of the trinity* he thus authoritatively condemns; "O ye, who have received the Scriptures! "exceed not the juſt bounds in your reli- "gion, neither ſay of God any other than "the truth. Verily Jeſus Chriſt, the Son of "of Mary, is the apoſtle of God, and his "Word, which he conveyed into Mary, "and a Spirit proceeding from him. Be- "lieve therefore in God, and in his apoſtles; "and ſay not, *There are three Gods*; forbear "this, it will be better for you ‡." And

* See *Ockley's* hiſtory of the Saracens, vol. II. p. 38, 279.

† See *Sale's* Koran, vol. I. p. 23. vol. II. p. 10, 184, 315. ‡ Vol. I. p. 126.

 again,

again,—" Chriſt, the Son of Mary, is no " more than an apoſtle; other apoſtles have " preceded him, and his mother was a wo- " man of veracity: they both ate food."—The *note* upon it is this,—" never pretending to " partake of the divine nature, or to be *the* " *mother of God* *."

How unfortunate is it that the very learned Dr. KENNICOT, ſhould readvance a notion, condemned, with ſo much evidence, in the KORAN: and that has been the blackeſt diſgrace ever brought on the chriſtian name, in regard to abſurd and unreaſonable opinion.

We are thus enabled to collect the genuine *original* of that deformity which now ſits on the face of the chriſtian profeſſion. Would we then contribute all we can, to reſtore the loſt ſimplicity and purity of the Goſpel-profeſſion? it muſt be by contemplating the man Chriſt Jeſus as the temple of the divine Word, and by ſo reverencing his inſtructions, as to be daily trained, by them, unto virtue and glory.

Obſ. VI. Some reaſonable conjectures may hence be formed, about the more immediate

* Vol. I. p. 146.

deſign

deſign of St. JOHN, in writing his ſupplemental Goſpel. The very learned and judicious Dr. LARDNER, thinks, that the time of its being written, and publiſhed, might be in the year 68. He ſees no reaſon to think it was deſignedly compoſed in oppoſition to any chriſtian hereſies; tho' many learned men have thought the *introduction* was ſo intended.—But with this eccleſiaſtical hiſtorian,—" it appears agreeable to the main " deſign of his Goſpel; for he therein ſhews, " that Jeſus came, and acted by the autho- " rity of God, the creator of the world, the " God, and ſupreme Lawgiver of the Jewiſh " people. The eternal word, reaſon, wiſ- " dom, power of God, which is God him- " ſelf, by which the world had been made, " by which he dwelled among the Jews in " the tabernacle and in the temple; *this* " *ſame Word* dwelled, and reſided in Jeſus, " in the fulleſt manner *."

He obſerves, " that there is little or no- " thing in his Goſpel, which is not *new* and " *additional*, except the account of our Sa- " viour's proſecution, death, and reſurrection,

* Supplement to credibility, vol. I. p. 437.

" where all the four Evangeliſts coincide in " many particulars: tho' even here alſo St. " *John* has divers things peculiar to himſelf *."

Undoubtedly, St. JOHN's Goſpel is ſupplemental. And therefore the obvious deſign of it certainly was, to record ſome things omitted by the other Evangeliſts: but inaſmuch as his record, is, chiefly of thoſe diſcourſes, which do relate to our Lord's divine miſſion and character, we may reaſonably conclude, that this hiſtorian had a more immediate deſign to provide the chriſtian church with the fulleſt evidence, " that Jeſus Chriſt both " taught and performed miracles, only by " the wiſdom and power of God, or by the " *Logos* reſiding with him." Nor does it ſeem improbable, but he likewiſe foreſaw, by a prophetic ſpirit, the danger chriſtians would more generally be in, of perverting the firſt principle of all religion, by aſcribing a real and proper divinity to the perſon of Jeſus Chriſt.

Of all the Evangeliſts, St. JOHN has been the moſt copious, in ſhewing, the nature of our Lord's divine miſſion, and his true and proper

* Supplement to credibility, vol. I. p. 449.

huma-

humanity. He narrates his explicit acknowledgments of dependence: his aſcribing all his divine abilities to the Father: and he lays before our eyes, the reſpect which Jeſus had to the joy ſet before him. And had chriſtians more religiouſly, uſed their reaſon and underſtanding, in conſulting this Evangelical record, they would not eaſily have been perſuaded of Jeſus Chriſt poſſeſſing any divine perfections of his own; who ſo frequently employed himſelf in acts of *ſupplication* and *homage* to his Father. There would certainly have been ſomething, in his *prayers*, that we could not ſo well reconcile with the idea of his being a divine perſon in the Godhead, of equal power and glory with the Father.——

It is indiſputably evident, that notwithſtanding the preſence of the Word of God conſtantly operating by him, to all the purpoſes of atteſting and rendring efficacious his heavenly miſſion; yet, he was conſcious, that this divine preſence with him, did not conſtitute any part of his own perſonality: and therefore it was that he ſo properly and be-

becomingly employed himſelf in acts of homage and devotion.—Many remarkable inſtances whereof, are recorded by this Evangeliſt. And one prayer, at large, he has given us, wherein there is expreſſed, a moſt pleaſing and exalted idea both of his piety and philanthropy. That devotional piece is truly matchleſs!

After all, ſome may be apt to retort upon us, by ſaying, "that ſo far from St. *John's* "Goſpel having had the happy effect of "preſerving the chriſtian world from a diſ-"poſition to deprave the doctrine of the "*unity*, that it has more generally been the "authenticated plea for ſuch depravity. The "heterogeneous opinions, do pretend to ſhel-"ter themſelves under the repreſentations "given, by this hiſtorian, of the teachings, "miſſion, and character of Jeſus."

The anſwer to this, ſeems very obvious;—the Deity, in demonſtrating his eternal power and Godhead, by the viſible creation, and by his univerſal providence, did, and does certainly deſign to teach men to form juſt and adorable ideas of him. But this did not,

nor

nor does it hinder them from forming the moſt idle and vain imaginations; or from deifying thoſe very works of his hands, the *ſun*, the *moon*, and the hoſts of heaven!—But will any hence ſay, that the viſible manifeſtation of God, is not adapted to demonſtrate his being and perfections!

The caſe is analogous, or it has a great ſimilitude; for St. JOHN's *introduction* to his Goſpel, and the whole of his hiſtory, has a manifeſt tendency to ſhew, that the very ſame being who created the world, and who has preſerved and informed mankind in all ages, by certain teachings and interpoſitions of his *Word*, in this or in the other manner ſhechinized, has, under the Goſpel diſpenſation, made his truth and his grace manifeſt, by that ſame Word dwelling with the man Chriſt Jeſus.—But inſtead of attending to this deſign of his Goſpel, men have fancied to themſelves, ſome of the moſt abſurd and myſtical meanings in this plain, intelligible, and excellent hiſtorian. Will it then follow, that St. JOHN has not expreſſed himſelf with clearneſs and preciſion, when he has written upon the great ſubject

of

of our Lord's divine miſſion? I ſhould be of opinion that there is no manner of ground for ſuch a diſhonourable concluſion.

The venerable eccleſiaſtical hiſtorian, mentioned under this obſervation, will allow me, to think, that tho' St. *John* did not form his *introduction*, with a deſign to oppoſe ſome hereſies, that had obtained when he wrote his Goſpel; yet, he was guided, by a divine inſpiration, to introduce his hiſtory in the manner he has done, in order, to prevent as much as poſſible, the chriſtian world from depraving and corrupting the doctrine of the UNITY.

P. S. The reader will perceive, that ſome late publications have led the Author to offer his thoughts on a ſubject, which he apprehends has not been well underſtood; except by a very, very few chriſtian writers. He is humbly of opinion, that Dr. DAWSON has had courage to deliver many very important truths, *in his illuſtrations*. At the ſame time, he is afraid, his manner of proving the *liturgy of his church*, to be upon the principles of the unity; is too paradoxical, to admit of an eaſy reception.

As

As to Dr. KENNICOT's propoſitions, he is perſuaded, that the DR. has very widely and moſt ſtrangely miſtaken his ſubject.—The Author of theſe conſiderations, however, has no deſign to offend either the one or the other of theſe writers; but preſumes upon the liberty of expreſſing freely his own thoughts in thoſe things wherein he differs from them; and of offering to the public ſuch a train of ideas which he has formed of the LOGOS, or *Word's being made fleſh.*

The Author will not enter into any altercation or debate, ſhould any chuſe to criticiſe, cenſure or condemn this his defence of the unity.—It is enough for him, that he is able to inſcribe it to the honour and glory of the one God the Father, and alſo to that of the one Lord.—And were it the laſt act of his life, he ſhould have a ſincere pleaſure in this attempt to reſtore the almoſt loſt idea, of the DIVINE UNITY.

APPENDIX.

ST. JOHN, in the introduction to his Goſpel, having ſpoken of the WORD as creating, makes mention of it as informing the world concerning the will of the Governor; or, as enlivening and refreſhing the Soul of man; which he thus expreſſes, *in him was life, and the life was the light of men.* This is a moſt affecting repreſentation! and is the ſame as if he had ſaid, obedience to the will of God is a life-giving, it is an immortalizing principle. See *Deut.* xxx. 15. *Pſal.* xvi. 11. *Prov.* xii. 28. *Eccleſ.* vii. 12. *Ezekiel* xviii. 19.—xxi. 22.—xxxiii. 13, 15, 16. compare *Matth.* xix. 17. *John* v. 26.—vi. 57, 58.—and many more authorities might be produced from the ſacred text. This is not affirmed of the animal, or bodily life; but of the ſpiritual or moral. Obedience to God ever gave *life* and *light* to the mind of man; and yet ignorance, idolatry and vice did ſo far prevail, *that the light*, is ſaid to have *ſhone in darkneſs.* Nay, there was a SECT famous among

among the Jews, " who would have the " actions and expectations of men terminate " with this preſent life."—But ſurely, ſuch could not be ſaid *to wait for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body.* Which a late learned and ſtudious *Divine* obſerves, " does not ſignify the reſurrection of theſe " frail bodies; but the deliverance which " good men will have, at the coming of " Chriſt, from a ſtate of mortality and " weakneſs *."

I cannot but be of opinion, that all good men have ever had ſuch deliverance, upon their finiſhing of this bodily life: and ſo I underſtand our Lord, when he ſays, *that as the Father hath life in himſelf, ſo has he given to the Son to have life in himſelf.*—The being who annually renews the face of nature, and gives freſh life to the world of plants and vegetables, was never unwilling to exert himſelf in behalf of reaſonable beings: but good men have found reſources in his power and wiſdom, for reſtoring life, and furniſhing them with ſuch bodies as are adapted to a more durable and perfect

* The Reverend Mr. *John Alexander*'s paraphraſe, &c. p. 36.

ſtate of exiſtence. This ſeems to be a very reaſonable opinion. And is it not thus that the bleſſed Jeſus ſays, *my Father worketh hitherto, and I work?*

The ingenious Author above-mentioned, (tho' a *ſoul ſleeper*) conſiders the reſurrection-body, "as not formed by any proceſs of nature, but by an immediate act of divine power, riſes ſpiritual and immortal; the body that is ſown, no more than the ſeed that is ſown, being the body that ſhall be produced, but altogether different in its frame and properties *." — And *again*, he obſerves, — "the apoſtle ſpeaks of no act of the divine power, to collect the ſcattered particles of matter, which compoſed the bodies of men, and reſtore them to their original place and office. — But it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that the ſame being whoſe wiſdom and power are never limited in their operations, is able to furniſh mankind with bodies of ſuch materials and of ſuch a conſiſtence, as ſhall be perfectly adapted to the ſtate in which they ſhall appear and act †."

* The Reverend Mr. *John Alexander*'s paraphraſe, &c. p. 87. † Ibid. p. 85.

Theſe

Theſe citations ſerve to ſhew, that the reſurrection-body, has no ſort of dependence on this frail body, nor any connexion with it. And that it is alſo an inſtantaneous production of divine power.

The common opinion he explodes, *viz.* that of the re-union of the ſoul to its former body, which is attended with two difficulties. "*Firſt*, that the heavenly happineſs is neither completed at once, nor gradually increaſes, but is given at firſt in ſome low degrees, and afterwards arrives, in an inſtant, at its height and perfection, when the body is raiſed. And *ſecondly*, that it muſt always be a conſiderable difficulty with thinking minds to conceive, why the honour and reward of a future ſtate, ſhould be repreſented as depending more upon the revival of the body long ſince mouldered away, than upon the preſence of God and of Chriſt, the ſociety of angels and bleſſed ſpirits, and the exerciſe and improvement of all divine and ſocial virtues. All which enjoyments, upon theſe principles, are prior to a reſurrection of the fleſh, and for any thing we know, capable of riſing in infinite progreſſion without it."

"Theſe

Theſe, undoubtedly, are great abſurdities. But, they have no place at all; if we ſuppoſe a reſurrection body *immediately given*, by an act of divine power. And why we may not conclude upon it, I do not underſtand. Pray what reaſon can be aſſigned for the ſuſpenſion of this act of divine power, which is never limited in its operation? eſpecially, when the ſoul is conceived of as having no more concern for ever with this frail body? or, what are we to underſtand by that reſurrection body, which, by an immediate act of divine power, riſes ſpiritual and immortal? where is the ſoul in the intermediate ſtate? could it not act without the frail bodily organs? how came we to know it could not, when an apoſtle did not? ſee 2 Cor. xii. 2, 3. *whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell.*—But I would farther aſk, how is it that St. *Paul* was caught up into the third heaven, and ſaw things unutterable? how was it, that St. *John* had his revelations and viſions of the heavenly world? and how was it, that St. *Stephen* ſaw Jeſus ſtanding ready to receive his departing ſpirit, if the diſſolution of this body, is that which renders the mind inconſcious? Nay, how is God, *not*

the

the God of the dead, but of the living, if all the pious dead do not live to him? and how is Jeſus Chriſt *Lord both of the dead and of the living*, if the dead do not feel the benefit of his Lordſhip? does he exerciſe it over inconſcious beings!

The idea of an infinite number of *Adam*'s deſcendants, being all blotted out of life, except the few tranſient inhabitants of this globe, is very ſhocking! much more pleaſing is the ſuppoſition, that the ſame being, whoſe wiſdom and power are never limited in their operations, does daily furniſh the pious dead with bodies perfectly well adapted to a better ſtate and world.—It ſurely is not reaſonable to imagine, that chriſtians can triumph over death and the grave, upon the ſcheme of the ſoul ſleeper.—But, by the immediate beſtowment of a reſurrection body, the dominion of death is actually made void; and that ſame Word *in which was life, and the life was the light of men* from the beginning, remains to be ſo, as it tabernacles with the man Chriſt Jeſus; it thus does conſtitute him, *the reſurrection and the life*.

This, methinks, muſt be the true ſtating of the caſe; ſince *dying* to a good man, is no more

more than quitting his momentary mortal connexions. *Moreover*, the preſent bodily organization is very unſuitable to more ſublime, ſpiritual and bliſsful ſcenes. *Meats are for the belly, and the belly for meats, but God ſhall deſtroy both it and them.* The deſtruction cannot extend farther. But becauſe the mind has attained to a genuine ſpirituality, it cannot be found naked or unprovided with a proper vehicle; it will have an houſe from heaven; and ſo it is that *mortality ſhall be ſwallowed up of life.*—Thus underſtood, *the life-giving* WORD *was ever and will ever be the light of men.* And this is the ſenſe of St. *Paul*, when he repreſents the Goſpel as a *new* creation, and the Moſaic ritual as old things that are paſſed away; yet he ſays, *all things are of God.* 2 Cor. v. 17, 18. "q. d. whatever concerns religion owes its birth and progreſs entirely to the ſupreme mind. He is the prime intelligent active cauſe, and the LIFE of the whole diſpenſation. For even under the Goſpel diſpenſation, no other beings have any ſhare, in the execution of the ſcheme, but as ſubordinate agents *."

* Conſult *Alexander*'s paraphraſe, p. 67. notes.

THE END.